

Report on the Health Status of Older Adults

Yavapai County, Arizona

Established by the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), the Healthy Aging 2010 project focuses on issues related to health promotion and disease prevention in older adults. While the older adult population in Arizona is living longer, older adults are not necessarily living healthier lives. Chronic diseases often occurring in conjunction with emotional health problems are the most prevalent yet preventable health problem in the State. An analysis of available indicators of older adult health provides information for planning and community initiatives. The following information and data describe the current health status of adults 65 years of age and older living in Yavapai County.

Population Characteristics

Table 1 presents information about the characteristics of older adults living in Yavapai County, as compared to Arizona and the United States. The 2001 population figures were estimated based on the 2000 U.S. Census. 22% of the total population in Yavapai County is over the age of 65, compared to 13.0% for the state and 12.4% for the United States. For all regions, the proportion of females is higher than males within the 65 and older age group.

TABLE 1: POPULATION ESTIMATES * FOR 2001

	Yavapai County	Arizona	United States
Total Population	175,507	5,307,331	284,796,887
Age 65+ Population	38,572 (22.0%)	690,995 (13.0%)	35,411,395 (12.4%)
Gender, Age 65+			
Male	18,024 (46.7%)	306,535 (44.4%)	14,582,434 (41.2%)
Female	20,548 (53.3%)	384,460 (55.6%)	20,828,961 (58.8%)
Race/Ethnicity, Age 65+			
Caucasian, non-Hispanic	36,810 (95.4%)	599,209 (86.7%)	29,595,582 (83.6%)
Hispanic	1,161 (3.0%)	57,413 (8.3%)	1,754,381 (5.0%)
African American	78 (0.2%)	10,053 (1.5%)	2,856,805 (8.1%)
American Indian	200 (0.5%)	14,360 (2.1%)	140,099 (0.4%)
Asian	88 (0.2%)	6,454 (1.0%)	810,399 (2.3%)
Other	270 (0.7%)	3,506 (0.5%)	254,130 (0.7%)

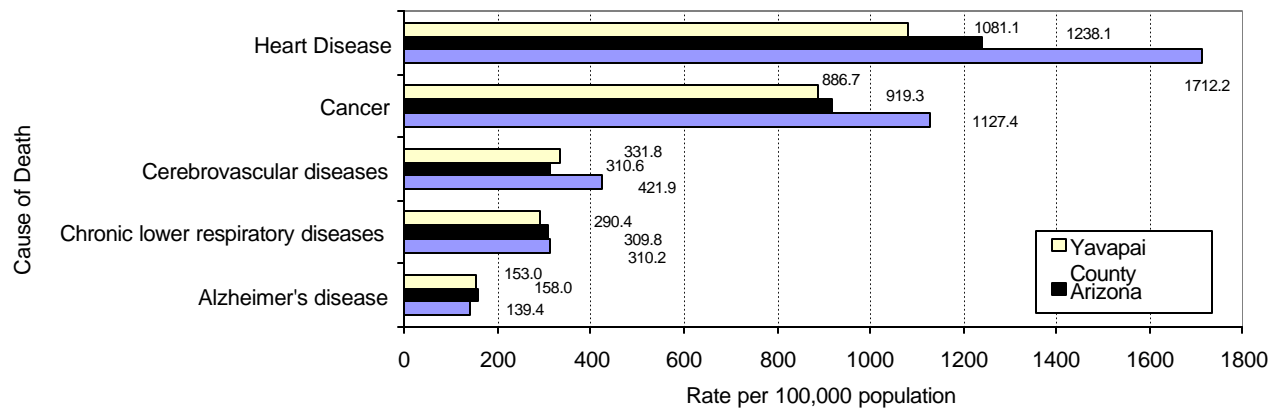
*Estimates calculated based on the 2000 U.S. Census

Mortality and Hospitalizations

The five leading causes of death among adults age 65 and older in Yavapai County for 2001 are shown in Figure 1. Since national death rates are not currently available for 2001; U.S. preliminary death data for the year 2000 are included in the figure for the purpose of a general comparison. Heart disease and cancer are the leading causes of death among older adults. For both categories, Arizona reported a higher death rate in 2001 than Yavapai County. Similarly, the state mortality rate was higher than the county for deaths due to chronic lower respiratory diseases and Alzheimer's disease. Yavapai County reported approximately 7% higher death rate due to cerebrovascular diseases than the state. A review of mortality data for 1996-2000 indicates that deaths due to cerebrovascular diseases among Yavapai County older residents rose above state levels during 1998 and 2000 as well. Whereas the national death rate in 2000 is higher than the 2001 state and county rates for all other categories, Alzheimer's disease claimed fewer lives nationally in 2000. A review of 2000 statewide mortality data for the purpose of a direct comparison indicates that Alzheimer's

disease resulted in 13% higher death rate countywide and 11% higher death rate statewide in 2000 than nationally.

FIGURE 1: FIVE LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH AMONG ADULTS AGE 65 AND OLDER; MORTALITY RATE PER 100,000



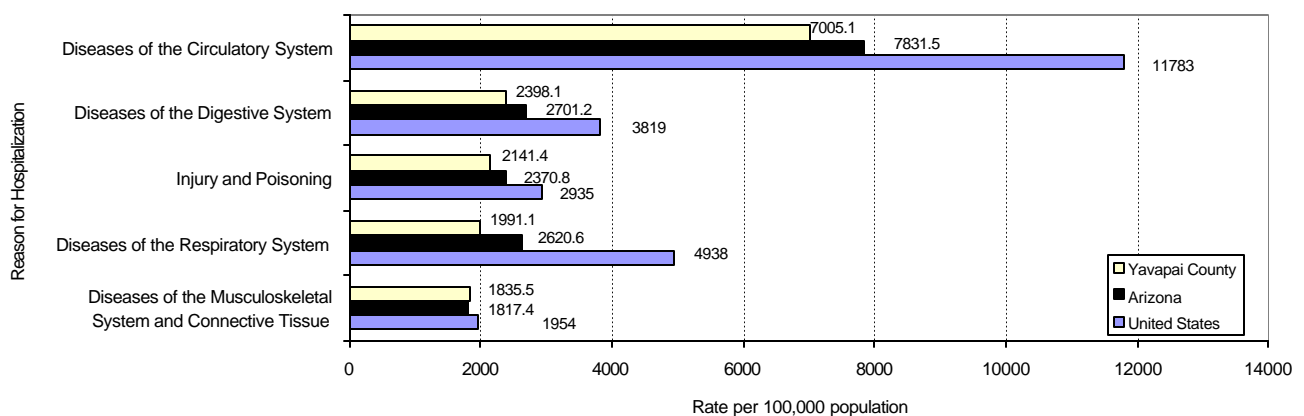
Source: Advance Vital Statistics Report. Arizona Department of Health Services: 2001.

Note: Corrections have been made to reassign reported deaths in Arizona counties originally listed as unknown.

National Vital Statistics Report, Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2000. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: 10/2001.

Figure 2 depicts the five leading causes of hospitalizations among older adults in non-federal facilities in Yavapai County, Arizona, and the United States, based on primary ICD9 diagnosis codes. While county and state data reflect hospitalizations during the year 2001, but because national hospital discharge data are not currently available for 2001; U.S. data for the year 2000 are included for the purpose of a general comparison. Federal facilities, such as Indian Health Services and Veterans Affairs hospitals, are not included within these data, and care must be given when considering hospitalizations within these populations. Also hospitalization data do not include treatment in emergency departments or outpatient facilities. Additionally, it is important to note that hospital discharge data describe the number of hospitalizations, rather than individuals; one individual may be represented multiple times within the data if that individual was hospitalized on multiple occasions within the same year.

FIGURE 2: FIVE LEADING CAUSES OF HOSPITALIZATION AMONG ADULTS AGE 65 AND OLDER; HOSPITALIZATION RATE PER 100,000



Source: 2001 Hospital Discharge Data. Arizona Department of Health Services.

Advance Data from Vital and Health Statistics, 2000 National Hospital Discharge Survey. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: 6/2002.

For all categories, the national hospitalization rate in 2000 was higher than the 2001 rates reported for both Yavapai County and Arizona. Yavapai County reported lower hospitalization rate than Arizona for all categories, with the exception of slightly higher rates due to diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue. In considering diseases of the circulatory, digestive, respiratory, and musculoskeletal/connective tissue systems individually, the leading medical condition within each category resulting in hospitalization for older adults countywide was heart disease, gallstones, pneumonia, and arthritis, respectively. Within the injury and poisoning category, hip fractures were the most frequently diagnosed medical condition, and falls were reported as the main cause of injury. The average length of stay in the hospital among older adults in Yavapai County was 4.6 days, compared to 4.7 days for Arizona and 6.0 days nationally (year 2000 data). The average hospitalization costs for Yavapai County seniors in 2001 was \$20,205, compared to \$21,289 for the state; national figures are not available. Cumulative data indicates that Yavapai County seniors incurred total hospitalization costs equaling \$163,919,278 for the year 2001.

Risk Factors

In considering leading chronic health conditions and mortality, it is important to keep in mind the role that risk factors play in health. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), established by the Centers for Disease Control, is a national telephone survey that polls individuals about specific high-risk behaviors, and is a useful tool in assessing the general health of the population.

Through the use of random dialing, the survey provides a representative cross-section of the national population. On a local level, however, the BRFSS is limited in its ability to represent the population, due to small sample sizes. Additionally, individuals not having a telephone within their household are excluded from participation, which in Arizona includes approximately 6% of the total population. **Thus, BRFSS data reported for the county is not representative of the county population as a whole, and caution must be used in interpreting data beyond the context of the surveyed population.** Despite their limitations, BRFSS data nonetheless provide general indicators about a community's health status. Table 2 describes demographic characteristics of the surveyed BRFSS population in 2000.

TABLE 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS ON THE BRFSS 2000, ADULTS 65+

	Yavapai County	Arizona	United States
Number of respondents, ages 65+	67	624	34087
Gender			
Male	29 (43.3%)	245 (39.3%)	11913 (34.9%)
Female	38 (56.7%)	379 (60.7%)	22174 (65.1%)
Race/Ethnicity			
Caucasian, non-Hispanic	65 (97.0%)	566 (90.7%)	28915 (84.8%)
Hispanic	0	45 (7.2%)	1977 (5.8%)
Black	0	5 (0.8%)	1764 (5.2%)
American Indian	2 (3.0%)	5 (0.8%)	332 (1.0%)
Other	0	3 (0.5%)	1099 (3.2%)
Mean Age (Years)	73.6	73.8	74.0

Of the 67 older adults surveyed in Yavapai County, 55.2% described their general health status as very good or excellent, as compared to 41.3% for the state and 35.4% for the United States. One surveyed adult (1.5%) in the county described his/her general health as poor, a lower rate than those reported for the state and the United States, 8.8% and 9.6% respectively.

Being overweight or obese, poor dietary habits, little or no physical activity, and tobacco use are all associated with an increase in health problems. As shown in Table 3, according to the 2000 BRFSS, 43.3% of the surveyed older

adults in Yavapai County are classified as overweight or obese by national health standards, yet only 19.4% of respondents reported current attempts at losing weight. Over half of the respondents in Yavapai County (58.2%) reported that they did not consume the recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day, and 23.9% reported being physically inactive. The remaining 76.1% of respondents reported participating in a physical activity, although only 41.8% of respondents exercised at the recommended activity level of 20 minutes or more on 3 or more days per week. This is higher than the state and national reported figures of 35.9% and 37.3%, respectively. The most popular activities among older adults, as reported on the statewide 2000 BRFSS, are walking,

gardening, golf, aerobics, and bicycling. Also in 2000, 1.5% of surveyed adults in Yavapai County reported that they are current daily smokers, a lower incidence than reported for the state and the nation, 7.4% and 7.9%, respectively. None of the daily smokers reported attempts at quitting smoking, with at least 1 day of non-smoking within the past year, compared to the state and national rates of 41.3% and 40.9%, respectively.

**TABLE 3: RISK FACTORS AMONG RESPONDENTS AGE 65 AND OLDER;
BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SURVEY, 2000**

	Yavapai County	Arizona	United States
Weight Group¹			
Normal weight	53.7%	46.8%	42.5%
Overweight	34.3%	35.1%	36.7%
Obese	9.0%	17.0%	16.8%
Unknown	3.0%	1.1%	4.0%
Daily Servings of Fruits and Vegetables			
Less than once a day or never	1.5%	1.4%	3.3%
1 to less than 3 times per day	10.4%	16.8%	21.9%
3 to less than 5 times per day	46.3%	38.8%	43.3%
5 or more times per day	41.8%	42.9%	31.5%
Activity level/exercise²			
Physically inactive	23.9%	37.5%	37.0%
Less than recommended activity	34.3%	26.6%	25.7%
Meets recommended activity level	41.8%	35.9%	37.3%
Smoking status			
Current smoker, smoke everyday	1.5%	7.4%	7.9%
Current smoker, smoke some days	1.5%	1.9%	2.1%
Former smoker	52.2%	41.3%	37.4%
Never smoked	44.8%	48.7%	52.1%
Don't know/refused question	0.0%	0.6%	0.5%

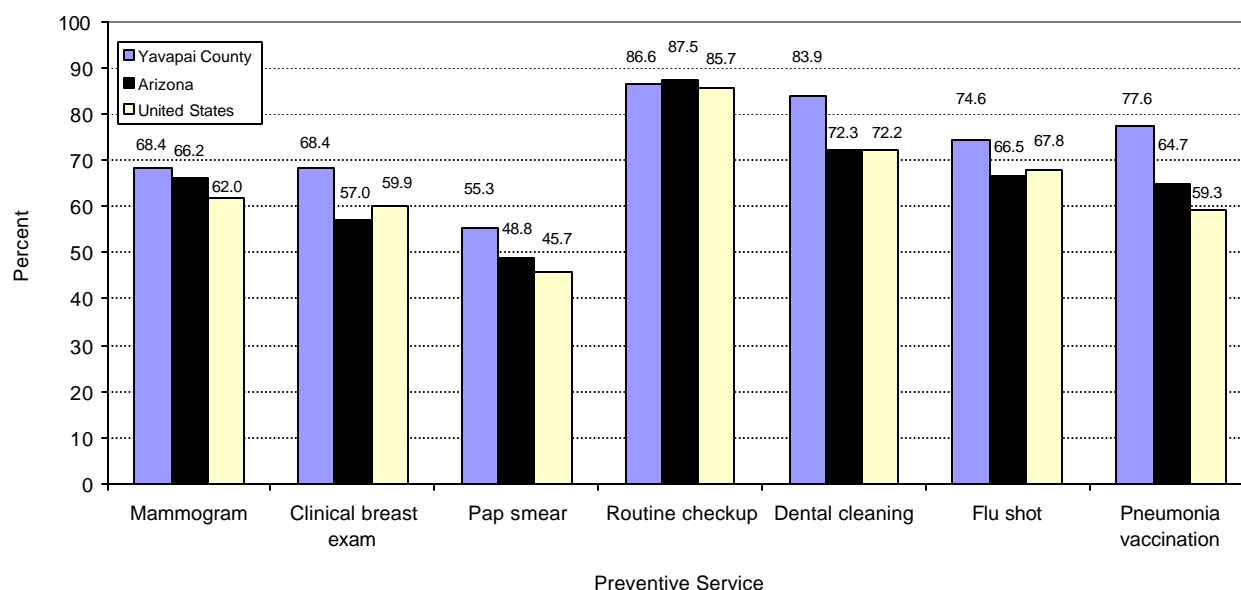
¹Based on Body Mass Index, BMI<25.0 normal weight, BMI 25.0 and < 30.0 overweight, BMI 30.0 obese

²Recommended activity is exercise 3 or more days per week for 20 minutes or more

Preventive Care

The use of preventive care services provides an effective means for maintaining or improving individual health status, and is especially important for the aging population. Yearly screenings for older adults are recommended for a number of healthcare services. Figure 3 demonstrates the use of such services among those age 65 years and older adults within the past year, as reported on the BRFSS. The percentage for pneumococcal vaccine, are reported for individuals receiving the vaccine at any point in their life.

FIGURE 3: PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS 65+ BY RECOMMENDED PREVENTIVE SERVICES USE; BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SURVEY, 2000



Among all survey respondents, “obtaining a yearly medical checkup” was the highest reported use of a preventive service, with a rate of almost 87% among Yavapai County respondents, compared to 87.5% and 85.7% for Arizona and the United States, respectively. Yearly dental cleaning was also highly reported among state and national respondents, a rate of approximately 72% for both regions, and interviewees in Yavapai County again reported a higher rate than the state and the nation, with 83.9% of respondents reporting having a dental cleaning within the past year. Nearly 78% of Yavapai County respondents reported ever having a pneumonia vaccine, as compared to 64.7% statewide and 59.3% for the United States. Similarly, more respondents in Yavapai County (74.6%) reported having a flu shot in the past year, compared to the 66.5% of state respondents and 67.8% for the nation.

In the category of women’s health, female respondents in Yavapai County reported a higher use of preventive services than state and national respondents. Approximately 68% of county female respondents reported having a mammogram in the past year, compared to 66.2% of state and 62.0% of national respondents. Having a breast exam performed by a health professional in the past year was also reported by 68% of county respondents, again a higher rate than the 57.0% reported statewide and 59.9% reported nationally. Yearly Pap smears were obtained by fewer than 50% of state and national female respondents, and by just over half of county respondents (55.3%).

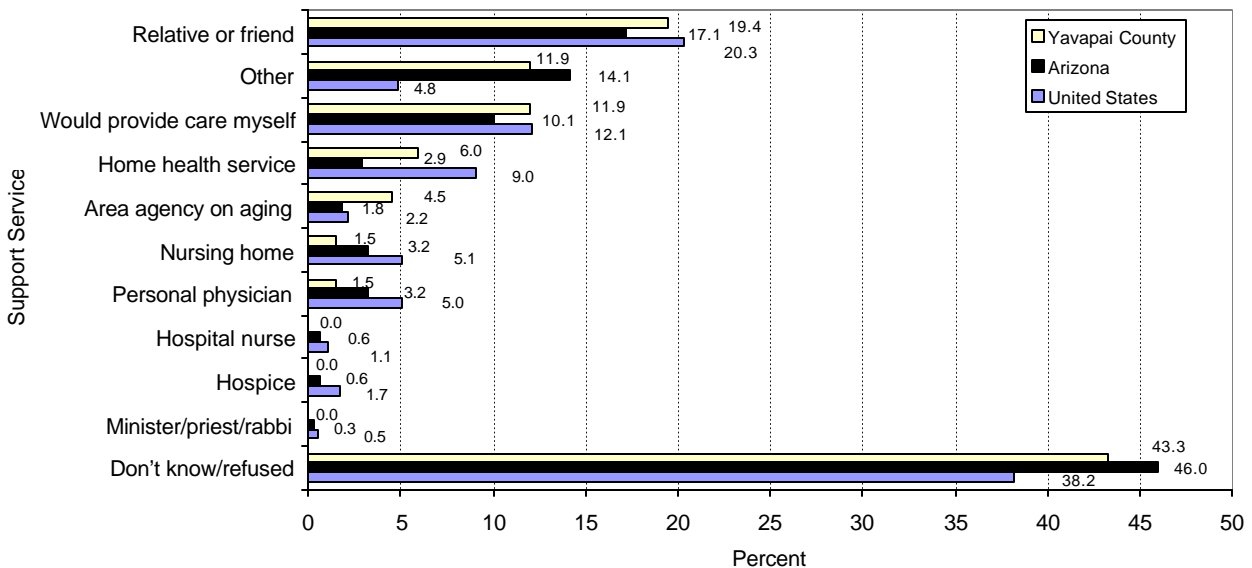
Mental Health and Support Services

According to BRFSS 2000 data, older respondents in Yavapai County reported an average of 0.5 days during the past month when their mental health was “not good”, in comparison to 1.7 days reported for Arizona and 2.1 days reported nationally. When questioned about more specific indicators of mental health status, for example feeling depressed, anxious, or not well-rested, 14.9% of older respondents in Yavapai County reported having at least 14 days of poor emotional health within the past month, compared to 23.7% of state and 22.3% of national respondents. While BRFSS data are by no means a clinical diagnosis of mental condition, 14 or more days of poor emotional health may indicate a need to seek professional attention.

Despite the proportion of older BRFSS respondents reporting poor emotional health, ADHS data indicate that only 0.5% of the population aged 60 and older received mental health treatment in 2000 through Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (RBHAs). RBHAs are community-based organizations contracted by ADHS that provide a variety of mental health services, predominately to individuals suffering from serious mental illnesses. Although these data only describe use of public mental health programs, excluding treatment provided by private agencies or personal physicians, it is nonetheless clear that many older adults in Arizona are not utilizing available mental health support services.

Support services potentially serve an important function in the daily lives of older adults who are unable to care for themselves. However, as shown in Figure 4, based on the 2000 BRFSS, approximately 45% of county and state respondents did not know who to call for assistance in the event that an elderly friend or relative required care. Although there are public services available to the aging community, less than 15% of the older respondents in Yavapai County thought of these services as a resource for needed care.

FIGURE 4: PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS 65+ BY PLANNED USE OF SUPPORT SERVICES ; BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SURVEY, 2000



BRFSS 2000: “Who would you call to arrange short or long-term care in the home for an elderly relative or friend who was no longer able to care for themselves?”

Survey participants were also questioned about their own need for assistance with personal care needs (e.g. eating, bathing) or routine needs (e.g. household chores, shopping). Ten individuals responded to these questions in Yavapai County. Of those, all 10 of the respondents indicated that they did not need help with personal care needs. One individual reported that he/she needed assistance with routine tasks, and that a parent or child provided the needed care. Any county respondent did not cite public services, although the small sample size must be considered in evaluating this observation. Statewide and nationally, public services were more frequently mentioned responses. In both regions, use of a paid employee or home health agency was the most often cited public service utilized for both personal care and routine needs.

Healthy Aging 2010

Working with government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private community-based programs, the Healthy Aging 2010 plan will “connect the dots” to the many activities and programs currently available to meet the needs of older Arizonans. For communities already engaged in health-related projects, it is hoped that this report will provide updated information on older adult health in Yavapai County. For communities not yet formally involved in such activities, hopefully this report will encourage interest and dialogue around initiating such projects. To learn more about the Healthy Aging 2010 plan, please contact Ramona Rusinak at (602) 542-1223 or visit the Healthy Aging 2010 website at <http://www.hs.state.az.us/phs/healthyaging2010/index.htm>.

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